MUNCHO LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

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Approved by:

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Date: March 11, 2003

MUNCHO LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK
Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

The park is situated at Kilometer 681 on the Alaska Highway, west of Fort Nelson. The 88 420 ha park surrounds Muncho Lake, a beautiful turquoise glacier-fed lake. The lake is the largest freshwater lake in the Northern Rockies. Set in the Northern Rocky Mountains, Muncho Lake Park is located within the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area. The surrounding region is rural, with Toad River being the nearest community.

Primary Role

The primary role of Muncho Lake Park is to protect representative forest, lake and wetland ecosystems of the Eastern Muskwa Ranges Ecosection and to a lesser extent, the Muskwa Foothills Ecosection. Muncho Lake Park is the third largest contributor to the representation of the Eastern Muskwa Ranges Ecosection, behind Northern Rocky Mountains and Dune Za Keyih parks. Three biogeoclimatic subzones are featured in the park, the AT unp, the BWBS mw2 and the SWB mk.

Mountain goat, Stone's sheep, black and grizzly bear, wolf, and lynx are found in the park. Special habitat has been identified where naturally occurring mineral licks exist in the park. The mineral licks play an important role in maintaining ungulate health. A significant lambing area has also been identified for Stone's sheep. The park provides excellent habitat for a myriad of migratory birds that pass through the region during the spring, summer and fall months. The geological formation of the Rocky Mountains is easily distinguishable, and provides an excellent opportunity to observe sedimentary processes.

Table 1: Provincial Ecosection Representation Data

Ecosection Name	% of the total Ecosection area within the province that is protected	Number of protected areas in this Ecosection	Area of this Ecosection in this Provincial PA (ha)	% of the province-wide protected area in this Ecosection that is in this Provincial PA
Eastern Muskwa Ranges	40.13	9	81,506	11.68
Muskwa Foothills	30.56	8	4,574	1.39

Table 2: Provincial Biogeoclimatic Zone Representation Data

BGC Code	% of the total BGC Code area within the province that is protected	Number of protected areas in this BGC Code	Area of this BGC Code in this Provincial PA (ha)	% of the province-wide protected area in this BGC Code that is in this Provincial PA
ATunp	22.47	151	28,709	0.76
BWBSmw2	2.18	25	525	0.35
SWBmk	22.44	21	55,023	8.24

Secondary Role

The secondary role is to provide front country recreation and tourism opportunities, followed by backcountry recreation. The park serves as a destination, travel corridor. The Alaska Highway services a considerable number of tourists from around the world. Stone Mountain serves as a stop over for many of these travelers. The park has two campgrounds to service travelers; Strawberry Flats and MacDonald campgrounds.

The park maintains the wilderness setting and traditional wilderness recreation of the remote northern park. The park is used for a variety of activities including back country horse trips, guided hunting trips, and photographic opportunities.

Tertiary Role

The tertiary role of the park is to protect the cultural history of the area. The Kaska-Athabaskan First Nation people had historical camp sites located in the park. Currently, a few members of the MacDonald First Nation live seasonally on an inholding in the park. The MacDonald First Nation people continue in a traditional lifestyle, living off the land in seasonal camps. The MacDonald First Nation utilize the ATV trails at certain places along the Alaska Highway. The historical significance is apparent given the Kaska-Athabaskan First Nation historical sites that have been identified.

Known Management Issues	Response
The 1984 master plan is outdated	• Prepare a park management plan within the next 5 years.
Road kills	• Ensure signage is implemented along the Alaska Highway, examination of speed limits through the park.
Loss of Stone's sheep due to disease (camelid)	• Restrict the use of exotic animals in the park (e.g. llamas), until sufficient study has proven that disease will not spread to Stone's sheep populations. • Ensure that livestock range does not result in interaction between Stone's sheep and domestic livestock. • Monitor sheep health and populations on a regular basis.
On-going highway re-construction throughout the park – more rapid traffic flow could cause increased animal mortality – Park boundary may be encroached upon; in some areas the slopes may be cut back past the 90 m right of way to prevent slumping	• Require that Ministry of Transportation operate during an identified environmental window when sheep are less likely to frequent the highway. • Work with the Ministry of Transportation to develop guidelines for highway construction and methods to reduce sheep mortality. • Consider changes to the park boundary and the Park Use Permits to accommodate the highway expansion.
Contamination due to fueling of aircraft, public works site, etc.	• Ensure aircraft fueling occurs away from water when possible. • Develop a set of (or standardize) procedures to

	mitigate the likelihood of refueling spillage. • The Department of Public Works will remove contaminated soils.
Fisheries issues, lack of methods to deal with population pressures – habitat loss due to highway realignment – fishing pressure (lake trout and, to a lesser degree, bull trout) – increased turbidity	• Work in tandem with Fisheries to develop strategies and objectives for habitat protection, and to establish ecologically sustainable catch limits.
Potential for trespass with in-holdings	• Ongoing monitoring.
Gravel pits, abandoned vehicle sites and dump sites in need of rehabilitation	• Monitor level of site contamination (WLAP and Regional District). • Develop strategies and objectives for reclamation. • Transfer bins are now used rather than dump sites.
Grave site management and traditional use sites	• Ensure comprehensive consultation with First Nations, establish specific strategies and objectives to manage the area.
Impacts due to uncontrolled access (e.g. river boats and snowmobiling), – poaching – wildlife populations become more susceptible to hunting pressures – harassing wildlife	• Monitor wildlife populations and introduce restrictions as necessary to ensure viability of the populations. • Limit access according to spatial, temporal and type of access. • Establish a reporting system to reduce wildlife harassment.
Highway camps and fuel storage	• Ministry of Transportation will carry out clean up of the sites.
No day use	• Day use area may be considered if future funding becomes available.

Zoning

Three zones have been identified for Muncho Lake. The Intensive Recreation Zone is located around nodes of activity along the Alaska Highway. This zone includes the two campgrounds, with a focus on ease of access, a high level of development, and a high amount of use. The level of current facility development in the Intensive Recreation Zone is not expected to occur beyond the boundaries of the Intensive Recreation Zone. This zone accounts for less than 0.2% of the park.

The Natural Environment Zone (approximately 80% of the park) is located from the south west to the north of the park. This zone designation provides for backcountry recreation opportunities with relatively open access for motorized vehicles.

The Wilderness Recreation Zone (approximately 20% of the park) extends from Nonda Creek south and is located in the southeast portion of the park. This area will be subject to greater access limitations, including reduced motorized use by ATVs. However, snowmobiles will continue to be an acceptable use, monitored closely. Non-consumptive backcountry recreational activities are acceptable in this zone.

CONSERVATION

Representation		
ecosection	X	Contributes to the representation of both the well represented Eastern Muskwa Ranges Ecosection (40.13%) and Muskwa Foothills Ecosection (30.56%). The park contributes 11.68% of the representation of the Eastern Muskwa Ranges Ecosection, placing it third behind Northern Rocky Mountains Park and Dune Za Keyih Park.
biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	X	AT unp – 22.47% protected; Muncho contributes 0.76% of overall representation; BWBSmw2 – 2.18% protected; Muncho contributes 0.35% of overall representation Provides significant representation of the well represented SWBmk variant; 22.44% of the variant in protected area system; Muncho contributes 8.24% of overall representation of this variant, placing it third behind Northern Rocky Mountains Park and Dune Za Keyih Park.
Special Feature	X	Erosion pillars
Rare/Endangered Values		
Scientific/Research Opportunities		There are opportunities for study, viewing and appreciation of the natural and cultural values of the park. There are extensive biological research opportunities in the park.

RECREATION

Representation:		
backcountry	X	The area provides accessible hiking, horseback riding, hunting, wildlife viewing and photography in a particularly spectacular wilderness setting.
destination	X	In-holdings; high local use. There is lodging in Muncho Lake Park, aerial tours over the park, fishing and other activities that make this location a destination.
travel corridor	X	The Alaska Highway serves as an attraction for many visitors. Travellers must pass through Muncho Lake Park on their journey; frequently tourists will stop because of the beauty of the park, the facilities, or as a rest before continuing.
local recreation		
Special Opportunities		
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	X	Trails and natural features (geology, flora and fauna) Historical (Alaska Highway) and Cultural (First Nations)

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Representation	X	Significant First Nations Cultural Values
	X	Building of the Alaska Highway

Special Feature

OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

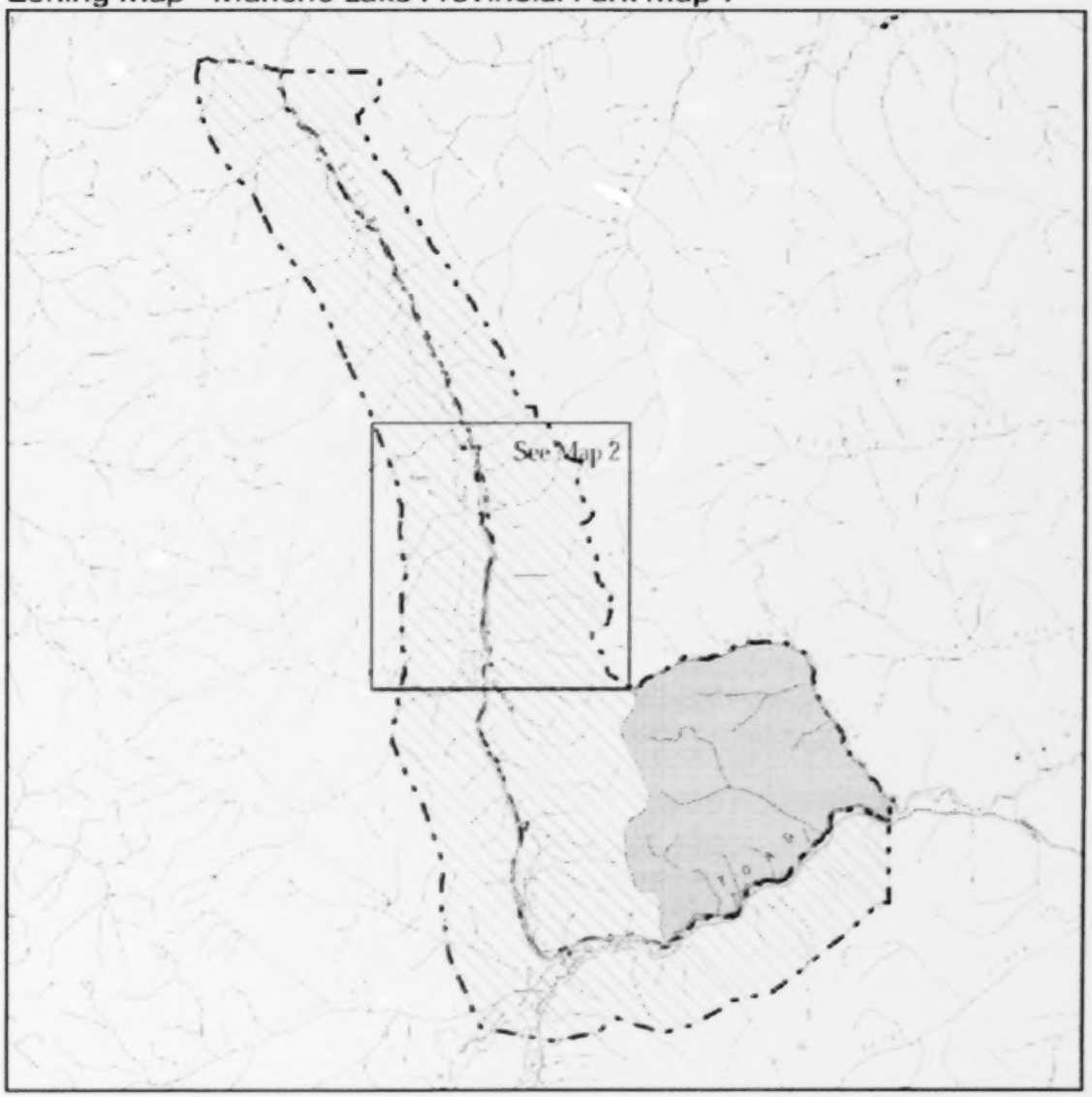
Other Designations

Relationship to Other PAs	X	Part of the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Located on the Alaska Highway between Stone Mountain and Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Parks
Co-operative Management Arrangements		
Partnerships		
Vulnerability		
Relationship to Other Strategies	X	Linked to the parks within the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area

Area: 88,420 hectares

Date of establishment: May 31, 1957

Zoning Map - Muncho Lake Provincial Park Map 1



Zoning Map - Muncho Lake Provincial Park Map 2